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# The Purposes of American Power: An Essay in National Security

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intrigued by entries which discuss such exotic aircraft as the Japanese Kayaba KA-1 which flew Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) missions from the flight deck of a small carrier in 1942; and the Third Reich's unpowered Focke-Achgelis FA-330 "automotive kite" which was towed aloft by a cable attached to a submarine traveling at high speed on the surface.

Authors Polmar and Kennedy have written what is sure to become a standard reference source on the world's military helicopters.

JOHN E. JACKSON

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Tucker, Robert W. *The Purposes of American Power: An Essay in National Security*. New York: Praeger, 1981. 190pp. \$12 paper \$5.95

During the early years of the Carter administration, Robert Tucker was among the few academics who recognized the danger of overreacting to the Vietnam experience and spoke out eloquently for a more realistic approach to national security policy. As the Carter years came to a close, Tucker remained at the forefront of those pressing for a more vigorous foreign and defense policy, and, in part through his writings in *Commentary* magazine, became identified with a tough-minded approach to the question of protecting petroleum supplies, including the possible requirement for US forces to seize oilfields in the Persian Gulf.

*The Purposes of American Power* is Tucker's contribution to the body of literature that sought to influence the foreign and defense policy process that the Reagan administration was expected to unfold in 1981. Like other essays of this kind, it has a very short half-life: written

in 1980, and published in 1981, many of its concepts have already been overtaken by events. For example, Tucker predicts that "without question, a more consistent and resolute American leadership would restore a measure of European confidence and elicit a greater degree of cooperation."

It is arguable that the issue of European-American relations is too complex for such a straightforward formulation: the experience of the Reagan administration's first year is that firmness of purpose does not automatically guarantee European support. As recent debates with some of the European allies over the Yamal Pipeline, contributions to defense spending, or US policy in Central America clearly indicate, it is not merely leadership, but the *direction* that leadership takes, and the degree to which that direction appeals to the Europeans' own perception of their interests (regardless of the accuracy of that perception), that affects the level of support forthcoming from Europe.

Events have also overtaken Tucker's argument in favor of US employment of the Sinai airfields that Israel was returning to Egypt. Egypt clearly will not permit the United States to operate from Etam and Etzion (whose Hebrew appellations are not likely to survive the passage of 1982) and Israel is in no position to grant the United States any rights over them.

What is striking about Tucker's book, however, is the clarity with which it both unravels the knots that complicate the formulation of national security policy—budget constraints, alliance obligations, public concerns about foreign policy—and dissects, and rejects, the arguments put forward by advocates of global containment, on the one hand, and of détente (however packaged) on the other. Tucker is also extremely

effective when he challenges the conventional wisdom that we should despair of operating in the Persian Gulf because the oilfields will inevitably be destroyed. What value, he asks, would the remnants of those fields be to any potential black-mailer of the West?

More controversial, and not necessarily compelling, is his case that "where Central American governments are not placed at a serious disadvantage by outside intervention, we should stand aside from internal strife. If by doing so further radical regimes should come to power, we would accept the outcome" as long as they did not become proxies of the Soviet Union. The problem is that we cannot become assured that they will *not* be proxies. Even Cuba did not become a proxy immediately after Castro's takeover. While direct US intervention in every Central American contingency is a dubious proposition to uphold, studied indifference is probably equally as questionable.

Whatever the merits of Tucker's case on Central America, however, the fact that he puts it forward as part of a larger blueprint for reasserting US power worldwide points to the sophistication of his overall approach, which he labels "moderate containment." Any student of international politics seeking to understand the complexities of the world environment of the 1980s would indeed benefit greatly from this well-written, stimulating book.

DOV S. ZAKHEIM

OASD (International Security Policy)

Margiotta, Franklin D., ed. *Evolving Strategic Realities: Implications for U.S. Policymakers*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1980. 217pp. \$5.50

This book is a collection of papers that were originally presented at the National

Security Affairs Institute Dinner Seminar Series. A broad range of topics is covered in the book's seven main chapters: from Soviet perceptions of the global situation to images of the citizen-soldier in contemporary society.

Vladimir Petrov tries to simulate a Soviet view of the world today, while bringing to light what he sees as new dimensions in Soviet foreign policy. Petrov argues that the underlying basis of current Soviet foreign policy is the quest for "equal status" with the United States, and a general recognition of the Soviet Union's global role. His deliberately one-sided presentation of "the facts" is interesting and thought provoking.

Harry Harding reviews the history of the US-PRC normalization since the mid-1970s. He specifically questions the wisdom and value of extensive military relations between the two countries, while raising more general doubts about the overall strategic significance of relations with the PRC for US foreign policy.

Melvin Conant examines the strategic importance of oil to US security. Among the issues he highlights: the competition for oil resources among the Western allies, the lack of strategic reserves, and, of course, the concentration of oil resources in the volatile and vulnerable Persian Gulf region. Conant argues that a strategic petroleum reserve should be one of the most critical elements of US national security.

James Oliver and James Nathan examine the role of possible use of economic levers in achieving foreign policy goals. They argue that the coercive use of economic power requires multilateral efforts (i.e., cooperation among key suppliers) to be successful. And even then, there are doubts as to whether the decentralized structure of the US